

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH JANUARY 11, 2005

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School Committee held a meeting on this date at

7 p.m. in the Junior-Senior High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Bill Clay, Paul McFadden, William Munroe, and Frank Maher. Superintendent Roy M. Seitsinger, Jr.; Director of Curriculum Philip D. Thornton; Director of Administration Robert V. Ross; Director of Special Services Maureen DeCrescenzo, and Student Representative Jaclyn Manchester were present.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Chair DeSack moved to go into Executive Session at

7:05 p.m. in accordance with RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 and in accordance with

RIGL 42-46-5(a)(8) for Student Confidentiality, written and verbal notice having been provided to the individual informing him/her of the right to hold the hearing in open session. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 7-0.

Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 7:05p.m.

Due to the inclement weather, Student Representative Jaclyn Manchester left the meeting at this time.

Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 8:01 p.m.

Chair DeSack stated that during Executive Session the School Committee voted 7 – 0 to expel a student for forty-five days.

Chair DeSack moved to seal the Executive Minutes of the above mentioned Student Confidentiality Executive Session. Seconded by Vice Chair Cicero. Voted 7-0.

ORDER - The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Vice Chair Cicero read the District Mission statement.

OPEN FORUM – A member of the community requested an edited and an unedited copy of the Teachers' Contract. Chair DeSack accepted his written request. Superintendent Seitsinger clarified the district has 10 days to respond to the community member's request.

A member of the community expressed her gratitude to Member McFadden for donating trees to Wawaloam School. She also noted that the Agenda did not include an item discussed at the last School Committee meeting, Recess as a Consequence. The

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committee explained that the item would be continued at the next School Committee meeting.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION – Elections of School Committee RIASC Delegate and SORICO – Member McFadden moved to nominate Member Munroe for SORICO Delegate. Seconded by Member Clay. Voted 7 - 0.

Chair Desack moved to nominate Member Clay for RIASC Delegate. Seconded by Member Coutcher. Voted 7 - 0.

Member Maher inquired about the duties involved in fulfilling the vacancy available as a SALT Visit Participant. Member Maher indicated that he would consider the vacancy until the next School Committee meeting.

PRESENTATION – Dedication of EWG-TV Studio to Normand Leveillee –EWG-TV Studio teacher Ronald Rounds gave an overview of Normand Leveillee’s teaching career at EWG Sr. High School, stating that prior to his retirement, Mr. Leveillee was the “backbone”

of the EWG-TV Studio. He stated that he would like to dedicate the TV Studio to Mr. Leveillee and name it, The Normand A. Leveillee TV Studio. He also indicated that he would like to publicly announce the dedication at Mr. Leveillee's retirement party on January 15, 2005.

Vice Chair Cicero moved to name the EWG TV Studio, The Normand A. Leveillee TV Studio. Seconded by Member Munroe. Voted 7 – 0.

Graduation by Proficiency – Principal Boulé gave a brief summary of the Graduation by Proficiency requirements. She reviewed the common tasks all students will need to complete in order to graduate.

She explained that the class of 2008 will be the first that will be required to produce a senior project for graduation. She stated that over the past four years a group of high school teachers have been exploring, through professional development and time of their own, what a senior project should look like. Because of their involvement, the high school is part of the collaborative and has been afforded through a \$2,500 grant an actual tool kit to begin to implement a senior project. It was noted that this program is an unfunded mandate, a requirement for graduation, and that the high school is lacking some of the necessary resources required for this program such as a Literacy Coach and a Senior Project Coordinator.

Member Clay reiterated that this is an unfunded mandate that the district is required to do and will need to spend monies for.

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ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Superintendent Seitsinger gave an overview of the Consent Agenda. Member Clay moved to accept the consent agenda. Seconded by Paul McFadden. Voted 7 – 0.

The following items were approved:

1. Minutes – Regular Minutes of December 7, 2004, Budget Sub-Committee Minutes from December 18, 2004, Budget-Sub Committee Minutes from December 21, 2004, (Sealed)Executive Session Minutes (A) from December 7, 2005, Executive Session Minutes (B) from December 7, 2005.

2. Personnel Items

Leaves of Absence – (As recommended by the Superintendent)

a. Hollice Emery – request to continue her unpaid parental maternity leave through June 2005 and returning in August 2005.

b. Roxanne Tisch – request for an unpaid parental maternity leave beginning at the end of her maternity disability leave and continuing for the second semester, returning in August 2005.

Resignation – (Recommended acceptance by the Superintendent)

a. Audrey Lussier - Letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement,

Effective January 7, 2005.

3. Bills – In the amount of \$362,803.42.

4. Correspondence – (1) Memo to SC Members from Superintendent Seitsinger regarding Budget Workshops, (2) American School Board Journal article – Governance – Mind Your P's, (3) Rhode Island Association of School Committees' Seminar Brochure, (4) RI Department of Education Diploma System Overview.

End of Consent Agenda

MONTHLY STATUS REPORTS – The committee had no questions regarding the monthly status reports.

NEW BUSINESS – Budget 2004-2005 – Mr. Ross reviewed the budget projection. He noted that the district is still in the black with a projected fund balance of \$22,221.

Member McFadden requested that Mr. Ross report the operations budget balance and not include the capital fund request of \$15,000. He stated that he believed the report should reflect the number that was passed at the District Financial Meeting.

Member Clay requested that Mr. Ross present this report the School Committee each month at its first meeting of the month.

Budget Framework – Superintendent Seitsinger gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the budget framework the district is addressing. He stated this year the Exeter – West Greenwich student population is almost exactly at a 50/50 ratio, and there has been a slight population decline in the elementary grades with a steep increase in the high school student population. He spoke of a proposed 138 unit housing development at Deer Brook, which could mean a significant increase in student population in the near future. He spoke about cost reduction strategies the district has taken. He spoke of legislative priorities, such as No Child Left Behind, Charter Schools,

RIDE Regent Regulations, which all cause a burden to the district's budget, noting that Charter Schools have doubled each year. He stated that we are below accounting recommendations, have incurred new mandated expenses this year that equal as much as 3% of our budget increase, we are 48th out of 50 in state funding to local schools, and we receive less than 4% from federal aid. State aid continues to decrease and federal aid has flattened. He stated that we have less and less choices to make about budget control, and will need to look at details of the budget line-by-line.

Metcalf Intercom System – Superintendent Seitsinger updated the committee on the issue of Metcalf School’s poor intercom system which needs to be updated or replaced because of safety issue concerns regarding communications between the main office and classrooms.

Member Coutcher explained that he had looked at Metcalf’s intercom system, and that he has experience working with home security. He thought the replacement of Metcalf’s existing intercom system would cost, including labor, approximately \$12,000.

Member Clay stated that the present intercom system is very old and it may not be possible to find someone to repair the system, also the system consists of 65 speakers, and the likelihood of finding that many replacement speakers is probably not possible.

Superintendent Seitsinger asked the School Committee to give approval to go forward and obtain three (3) formal written estimates which will be brought back to the committee for a vote.

Member Clay moved to obtain 3 formal written estimates to present before the School Committee. Seconded by Member Coutcher. Voted 7 – 0.

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School Bus No Idling Policy – 1st Reading – Enclosed in the School Committee packet was a copy of Laidlaw's No Idling Policy. Superintendent Seitsinger explained that the enclosed Laidlaw policy was a guide in which to use to create a district policy, and that the district is required to have its own individual No Idling Policy. Superintendent Seitsinger reviewed some specifics in the policy that Laidlaw Bus Company is required to follow. The No Idling Policy – 2nd Reading will be on the next School Committee agenda.

Curriculum Review Policy – Director of Curriculum Phil Thornton gave an overview of the Curriculum Review Policy. He stated that the policy will involve some cost down the road and will require a regular commitment in the budget going forward. This policy was placed on the agenda for informational purposes only.

Auditor General Request by Mr. McFadden – Member Clay asked Member McFadden why he put in a request to the Auditor General and why he signed his request as a School Committee member without the permission of the School Committee.

Member McFadden stated that he felt the School Committee did not follow the proper procedures in order to close the deficit and that they may have exceeded the allocated District Financial Meeting monies.

Chair DeSack stated that the district does not have a deficit.

Member McFadden stated, “At that meeting we were identifying a potential deficit.”

Chair DeSack stated that the Auditor General will decide on the issue at hand. She also noted that the proper School Committee process and procedure notification was not made to the School Committee itself, and that the School Committee found out about the request by reading it in the newspaper. The proper procedure and process should at least be notification to the committee and a copy of any communication that any member will sign as a representative of the School Committee.

Member McFadden said the reason he did not notify School Committee members was because the issue was no longer pending before the School Committee because the School Committee was satisfied with the matter. He was only seeking the Auditor Generals’ opinion to see if the School Committee violated procedure.

After lengthy discussion, Chair DeSack stated that there are School

Committee bylaws and guidelines binding members to work together and to act only through board work with each other. She also noted, it is very important that members set procedural steps in the bylaws so that the committee can operate and function appropriately as a committee.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Metcalf Enrichment Program – Superintendent Seitsinger stated that the district has been monitoring the Metcalf Enrichment Program since the committee took action to eliminate the program. Parents have been working on their own to keep the program up and running. We now have a reallocation of funds totaling \$1,500 which is equal to 60 hours of work, to pay teachers to assist parents and this program. It was not necessary to vote on this issue as it is a reallocation of funds from within the same area of the budget. Superintendent Seitsinger recommended that Director of Curriculum Phil Thornton manage and distribute the funds to the parents and teachers for the enrichment program curriculum.

Vice Chair Cicero recognized and thanked Lisa Dallas for all her work in the program.

Open Forum – Clarification – Superintendent Seitsinger clarified that according to the district’s legal council the School Committee is permitted to respond to and to ask questions of presenters during Open Forum. The committee should not reach consensus or take a vote on issues. There has not yet been a response to Superintendent Seitsinger’s letter to the Attorney General regarding this matter. Consensus from the School Committee was that Superintendent Seitsinger should, through Council, send a second letter to the Attorney General.

Epi-Pen/Laidlaw Policy Follow-up - Superintendent Seitsinger stated that he has had multiple conversations with Laidlaw management since the last School Committee meeting and that he is hopeful Laidlaw will agree to change language in their policy and pick up the responsibility to assist in a medical emergency, although he has not gotten written confirmation as of yet. Superintendent Seitsinger plans to write a letter to parents of students carrying Epi-Pens to keep them abreast of the situation, but is holding off until he receives documentation in writing from Laidlaw.

A community member voiced her concerns regarding making sure that all buses have a radio or cell phone on them. She also stated that the district needs to address the concern of what to do for students if an emergency occurs and the bus is in a dead zone and is unable to use a radio or cell phone.

A parent of two students that carry Epi-Pens stated that she just wants to know that someone is there and will help any student that has a medical emergency on the bus.

Chair DeSack assured the parent that the committee would keep her abreast of this situation and contact her as soon as Superintendent Seitsinger gets a response from Laidlaw. Chair DeSack assured the parent that the district is diligently trying to resolve this issue.

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Parent Involvement Policy # 2301 – Second Reading – Member Clay stated that the suggestions/additions made by Member Maher to the Parent Involvement Policy # 2301 were instated and that no other amendments were made. The policy will be adopted at the next School Committee meeting.

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – Superintendent Seitsinger reviewed the Budget Workshops dates – January 12, 18, 20, 24, 27 and February 3, 2005 (if needed). It was noted that there was a change to the budget workshops - the Sr. High and the Jr. High switched their original dates with each.

Member Maher inquired about the issue discussed at a previous School Committee meeting regarding the Healthy Choice snack list. He asked if the vending machine supplier, Mr. Sepe, had provided the snack list to the committee yet.

Consensus of the committee was that Member Maher should contact Mr. Sepe to obtain a copy of the snack list.

Member Maher expressed his concern about the Executive Session held at the beginning of tonight's meeting. He asked if Executive Session is held at the beginning of the meeting, if the meeting could start earlier so that the members of the public do not have to wait in the hall while Executive Session is held. Also, he asked if copies of the Agenda could be posted at the local post offices.

Consensus of the committee was that in addition to the current locations the Agenda is posted, it will also be posted at the Coventry Post Office, the Exeter Post Office, the Exeter Library and Louitt Library. Executive Session can be held earlier, but this is not always convenient for the parties involved, including some committee members.

Executive Session – Vice Chair Cicero moved to go into Executive Session at 10:10 p.m. in accordance with RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1) for the discussion of personnel. Seconded by Member Coutcher. Voted 7 – 0.

Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 10:09p.m.

Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 10:21

Chair DeSack stated that during Executive Session the School Committee voted 4 - 3 not to add to the disciplinary action against those responsible for the 9th grade English writing assignment discussed at the November 23, 2004 School Committee meeting. Chair DeSack, Vice Chair Cicero, Clerk Coutcher, and Member Clay voted no.

Meeting adjourned at 10: 22.

ROBIN CERIO, CLERK